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CIA official urges universities: Keep data from Soviets

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WASHINGTON — Top intelligence officials, concerned about a "massive Soviet effort" to acquire U.S. technology, told Congress yesterday that American scientists and universities should reduce the flow of sensitive information to the Soviet Union.

Unless the transfer of information is halted voluntarily, there may be pressure from the federal government to block it, Adm. Bobby Inman, deputy director of the CIA, told two House subcommittees.

Soviet efforts to gain access to basic research "is only a small part of the problem" of the "outflow of technology," Inman said.

There has been "a massive Soviet effort" by a "wide range of means" to learn about U.S. research, particularly applied technology, he said.

About 70 percent of the Soviet efforts to learn about U.S. technology come through intelligence or legal and illegal attempts to purchase that information, he said, adding that most of the efforts are aimed at finding out about applied technology,

such as weapons systems or missile guidance information.

But U.S. agencies are stepping up their counterintelligence efforts and "if we are successful, we will cut off many of their avenues," Inman said.

That, he predicted, will lead to Soviet efforts to gather information about basic research, much of which is done at universities.

Attempts to restrict the flow of basic information do not have to infringe on academic freedom, he said.

As more and more universities are moving into areas that have commercial applications, such as genetic engineering, they have restricted the availability of information about their research, he said, suggesting that such restrictions could be applied to national-security matters.

"I have not put a proposal on the table to control anything," Inman said, explaining that he was trying to be a "gadfly" and simply wanted to raise the warning flag.

In an open society such as the United States, "you'll never control the flow of information without unac-

ceptable damage" to basic freedoms. But there needs to be an attempt to impede the flow, he added.

George Millburn, acting deputy undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, said the exchange of information between the United States and the Soviet Union is "one-sided." He said there is only "very, very minimal" benefit to the United States.

The administration is considering a draft executive order on secrecy that would permit the government to more easily claim national security in keeping information secret.

That proposal and Inman's warning have raised concerns in the academic community that the administration wants to restrict the flow of information.